

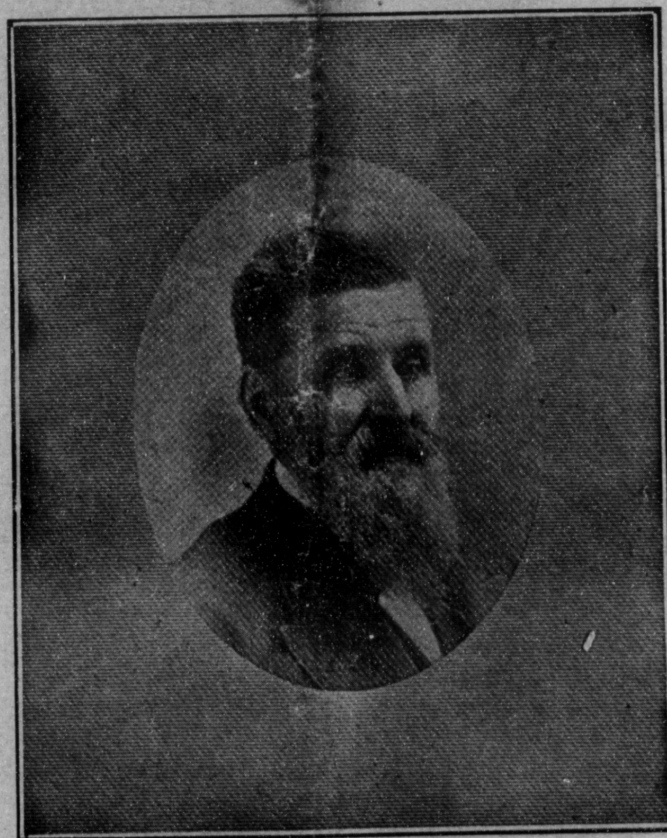
BLUE GRASS BLADE

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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT



JOHN PECK.

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

John Peck

When the mind reverts backward to earlier pages in life's great history, former customs and sentiments must of a necessity be associated therewith. We of this day enjoy freedom simply by inheritance. Religious bigotry, like political tyranny, would be just as severe in its mental and physical penalties, as it was years ago, save for the labor and suffering of those who lived in an earlier age. The progress of the present is built upon the labor of the past. Those condemned in one age for opinion's sake, are commended in the next.

We have all read about the "Village Blacksmith," and varying ideas will be created thereby. Whenever we see the name, our mind invariably reverts to John Peck, for years one of the most attractive Freethought writers in America, known far and wide among Freethinkers. He was the village blacksmith, and while his personality may not have inspired the famous poem by that name, yet in the history of Freethought in America his name will reach that degree of fame accorded to the poetry we have mentioned.

John Peck was born near the village of Ovid, in Seneca County, New York State, November 19, 1819. He met with and experienced all the dangers incident to rural life existing during that period. The Republic was in its infancy. Its police power was largely dependent upon military effort and but small protection could be afforded to those inhabitants of the outposts. While a mere boy his father moved to the edge of Canandaigua Lake, where he had acquired a tract of land, and upon and about the waters of this historic spot young Peck grew to young manhood. Fishing and boating, hunting in the forests, startling the wild deer, and then watching the eagle in its majestic flight, monarch of the air. Riley's "old swimming hole" afforded no greater charm for the boys in its vicinity than did the waters of that great lake for John Peck. He delighted to tell how he could stand and watch the fury of the elements when the storm broke over the lake, and then, when it subsided, he was in a boat exploring its surface. That moment brought a superior charm to his mind, for above all else he was a child of nature. He loved the conflict and he loved the calm that followed in its wake. Natural things appealed to him and he grew to disregard the supernatural. His value to Freethought can thus be judged by those who may come after him.

Until nineteen years of age his life was spent on a farm. At that age he went to Penn Yan, New York, there to learn the smithing trade, to which he had taken an especial fancy, and in his spare moments he attended the village school to incidentally improve his educational opportunities along with his attempt to master a mechanical trade. His education came faster than his acquisition of a trade, and the next thing we find him doing is teaching school. This he followed for some years, and, still

bent upon personal improvement, he took up the study of astronomy. This fascinated him. He began to deliver lectures on the subject. The vast and ponderous machinery of nature moved him as naught else could. He applied his knowledge to the theology of his day, and with sledge hammer blows he sought to shatter the myths and superstitions with which he was surrounded. He tried to impress others as he had been impressed, and being satisfied that too much of myth, fable and absurdity were mixed up with the religious worship he came in contact with, he strove, at every point, to focus a new light through the dense clouds of religious bigotry and orthodox ignorance. It was an unthankful task in those days. The American people had not yet reached that stage of indifference to theology that marks our own. Practically every man, woman and child, in the country, were then members of some church. They believed without investigation. John Peck investigated for himself and he could no longer believe. The pious took pains to denounce him, but he kept manfully on, until he rejoiced in witnessing a more rapid and substantial growth of the very ideas he had so industriously promulgated.

Among his own writings appears a statement which is to the effect that he was like some fabled Irishman who was "never at peace unless in a fight," but his conflicts were mental and he won. Later in life he made the acquaintance of the illustrious D. M. Bennett. A firm friendship sprang up between them. John Peck began to write for the Freethought press and his works found ready publication in Bennett's paper. In this way was the name of John Peck circulated throughout the country until today it is known in every State in the American Union. His life was one of continual warfare. Most of his writings were prepared upon his knees as he could steal a few brief moments from other things.

Beginning with about 1840 John Peck took prominent part in the agitation which now began to appear against slavery. He looked upon the system as a gigantic evil. He kept up the agitation as best he could where an opportunity occurred. At last came the conflict and when the war was over, slavery no longer in the land, he turned his attention to the liquor question and worked for the abolition of rum. Political and financial reform, but a reform that meant improvement, found in him a constant and faithful ally. As he loved to stand and watch the battle of the elements as a boy, so as a man he sought out the most vulnerable points in the armor of the foes of mental liberty and human happiness, and he shivered hard blows upon them.

The life and career of John Peck speaks for itself. Thousands of American Freethinkers have known of him but to admire him.

Striking A Balance Sheet

The Rise of Popedom—Ethical Status of the Different Popes—
Church Falls on Wrong Side of Ledger.

ARTICLE II.

(By Judge Parish B. Ladd.)

The popes, being the head of the church, consequently the fathers of Christianity, their moral status, to the extent of its bearing on the matters of Freethought and Christianity, will now be in order.

The Catholic church claims that Peter received his credentials from Christ as the head of the church, so he was the first pope; but this, like all of the church's other claims, is a fraud, for both Christ and Peter were myths. This claim rests on the Isidorian Decretals, giving the history of the popes and the church from the time of the alleged Christ down to Innocent I., 402 to 417 C. E. This pope was, in fact, the first who set up a claim over all the churches. Before his time the different churches had each its own head, who was called bishop. This leaves over 400 years of a vacuum back to the alleged Peter, which the church has never been able to fill, other than by these forged Decretals, by which she claims an unbroken line from Christ to the present time.

During the alleged pontificate of the myth Siricis (384-398), first appeared what is known as the series of decretals of pseudo Isidorus. These decretals the church needed, so she forged them and placed them in the Vatican with her other forgeries, where ever since then she has at all times, when needed, dug up anything and everything wanted. These decretals were kept a secret until the fifteenth century, when they were discovered to be base forgeries, now so admitted by all schools, Catholic and Protestant. The growth of the church after Constantine was so rapid that the bishops finally acquiesced in the claim of Innocent to be the general head of the church; after which he at once conceived the idea and commenced to carry it into execution, of making the church the mistress of the world, civil as well as ecclesiastical. Innocent soon laid his plans to subjugate the civil powers of Europe, the struggle for which will appear later on in another article, leaving me here to deal with the ethical standing of the popes, but only to a limited extent.

Prof. Draper, after reviewing their lives, says: "The biography of the popes is infamous." As they were the makers and representatives of Christianity, the system itself must necessarily be equally nefarious.

On the death of Pope Paul I. Constantine became pope; Stephen IV. usurped his place, put out the eyes of Constantine, cut out the tongue of Bishop Theodorus and thrust him in a dungeon, where he died. The nephew of Pope Adrian seized his successor, Leo III. and unsuccessfully attempted to put out his eyes and cut off his tongue. Stephen V. was banished as a criminal. Paschal I. put out the eyes of two ecclesiastical enemies. John VIII. bought off the Saracens; a share of the plunder they divided with the bishop of Naples for his friendship; for this John excommunicated him. Here followed an ecclesiastical plot to murder John. Some of the treasure of his church was seized, when he died at the hands of Formosus, who was made pope 891 C. E. Formosus was succeeded by Boniface VI., 896, although, he had been driven from the priesthood for bad conduct, by Stephen VII., who became pope. Then

followed the scene of taking from the grave the dead body of Formosus, placing it in an upright position, going through with a trial, followed by a sentence, and cutting off two of his fingers. This was followed by the strangulation of Stephen. From 896 to 900 five popes were consecrated. Leo V., 904, was thrown into prison by one Christopher, who usurped his place, who, in turn, was expelled from Rome by Sergius III., who by force seized the pontificate, 905. Sergius adopted Theodora, a prostitute, with her daughters, Marozia and Theodora, both bad characters. These women kept Sergius under their control. John X. was also a lover of Theodora; to him she gave the bishopric of Ravenna and later made him pope, when after fourteen years, having incurred the displeasure of Marozia, she threw him into prison and then killed him. Then Marozia made her own son pope as John XI. Another of Marozia's sons being jealous of his brother John, threw both him and Marozia into prison and shortly after this, Albric's son being made pope, took the title of John XII., at nineteen years of age. His reign became so shocking that the Emperor Otho I. called a synod to try him. On the trial it was proven that he had taken bribes for the consecration of bishops, one only ten years of age. John was charged with incest with one of his father's concubines, and with so many other adulteries that the Lateran Palace had become a brothel. Nor was this all, for he put out the eyes of one ecclesiastical and mutilated another; both dying of their injuries. Drunkenness and gambling were also added to his crimes. For these popish irregularities he was deposed and Leo VIII. elected in his place, 963 C. E., but subsequently getting the upper hand he seized his antagonists, cut off the hand of one, the nose, finger and tongue of the other. He was finally killed by the husband whose wife he seduced.

Then follows John XIII., who, for his crimes, was strangled in prison. Then comes Boniface VII., who imprisoned Benedict VII. and killed him by starvation; here follows Pope John XIV., who was put to death in the dungeon of the castle of St. Angelo. Then the corpse of Boniface was dragged by the populace through the streets. The Emperor Otho being disgusted with the depravity of the Roman popes, put Gregory V. on the pontifical throne. His thunders and edicts were turned to derision by the Romans, who forced him to fly the country. Otho having returned to Italy seized the Anti-pope John XVI., put out his eyes, cut off his nose and tongue, mounted him on the back of an ass with his face to the tail put a bladder on his head and sent him through the streets. Benedict, now a boy twelve years old, was put on the pontifical throne. Victor III., one of his successors, declared that Benedict's life was so shameful, so disgraceful, as to be without precedent.

The people, unable longer to put up with his shameful acts, among them the highest crimes, rose in mass against him. Seeing his predicament, he put up the papacy at auction and sold it to a presbyter named John, who became Gregory VI.

Having thus shown an outline of the ethical status of Christianity as represented by the popes, the fathers, makers and representatives of the system, claimed by the present clergy as the embodiment of all purity, goodness and progress, I hold my breath, pause, and get ready for the next step in this line of Christian purity, which will be devoted to the struggle between Freethinkers and Christianity for the civil governments of Europe.

Orthodox Tyrannies Creep Upon Us

Indifference to Small Things Leads to Many Others, but American Freethinkers Are Admonished to Be Alert.

(By Allie Lindsay Lynch, S. O.)
("Aunt Allie.")

Because that in "Uncle Remus's—the Home Magazine" for August President Roosevelt has seen fit to declare for Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" as America's national hymn—and which we know to be wholly religion—is it not time that the pens and voices of Freethought's best advocates be lifted to check, and thereby prevent of more of religious tyranny than is everywhere dominant in the very air to suppress free speech?

Our inactivity would allow of this step by religion's devotees becoming a hymn of tyranny to permeate our schools, our armies and navies; everywhere, in fact, where the child's and child-mentalities could be imbued therewith a thought of its sacredness. Into our rights is this damnable error to be foisted more heavily upon us:

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the lord?"

With "In God We Trust" stamped into the coin of the realm, and "God Is Marching On" stamped into our national hymn, to be everywhere sang—knowing of music having its charms and power to sway with a hypnotic effect—let us unitedly cry out against such desecration to Freedom in America? Or we will have the Inquisition tortures recalled to our shores this time. For this Catholicism is working. Our Brunos will be burned at the stake unless we unite to protest!

The former Populist Presidential candidate—Tom Watson—has presented to America a vivid picture of the present situation, which even now tends toward the

"Dark Age" conditions religion produced. Our government is so hypnotized by the domineering influence of Catholicism that it is strenuously striving to put the ban upon the freedom of press—has passed a law to permit postmasters to destroy, even burn up the subscriptions paid for, the periodicals of a political party. This law is aimed at Socialism at present, but it will revert to Freethought.

Socialism is out for "the people," to instruct the masses how to vote in their own interests. Religious rivals rely most on their music to "bring sinners to repentance." Why not we as a nation once freed, recognize the fact that hymns have no place in public schools and bar these from all schools wherein youth is being taught that America is a great nation? For this greatness the Revolutionary fathers laid down life to keep church and state apart.

Alas, that America is now so contaminated as to be ruled, or nearly so, by that damnable ignorance which Paine, Washington, Franklin, Jefferson and others of historic fame and great mentality bravely brought this nation from under—religious tyranny!

Will Freethought sit silent and permit of national hymns, written by religious mentalists and indorsed by such, being foisted, by this man's popularity and influence—who through Catholicism's assassinating power was placed in the highest chair in this land—and being instilled into the mentalities of the children on which America is to stand or fall? Is America to be ruled by a Freethought or a Catholic power? I ask this in all seriousness.

Julia Ward Howe is an old woman, harmless in intentions, but blinded by religion. Yet her instinctive sense of purity and justice has, possibly, produced a "vision" which is already made of much

note, but is misunderstood as to its meaning—if meaning it had.

The only cause which would "stoop down to their fellows and lift them higher, higher and yet higher" is that of Freethought—Socialism. In a sense I may be said to have taken leadership or a step toward teaching Freethought to the Socialistic movement; then, my effort to introduce Keeler's "Short History of the Bible," a book that if read with reflection, I know is calculated, as nothing else is, to do most to destroy belief in bible myths. As no other book can, I reaffirm, because religion is based on the bible, and the book's history shown up to mentalities will be the destruction of its myths! Hymns will cease to pollute the atmosphere! Buy the book of me, give or lend copies to others. In this matter of my mailing out folders, let us co-operate for the great purpose for which I have more than a year carried on at my own expense, as a labor of love. Unable to do this longer alone, I say that I am not begging. But as an earnest woman I invite co-operation for sales of Keeler and a few other great books, done in "small packages," of immense value. I avow I am not brilliant. As an earnest woman I have been classed among the "mental aristocrats" in Freethought ranks, and by no less popular a comrade than Joseph H. Greer, M. D. Also by his well-known father, Dr. Robert Greer. These men I dare to give as my reference, without asking permission of them, simply to have the reader recognize my truthfulness, let me say. Until necessity admonishes I have never requested a postage stamp along with an address for further information to be sent.

6952 Parnell avenue, Chicago, Ill.

The Pending Political Battle

Iowa Freethinker Offers a Few Trite Suggestions Upon Religious Issues in the Presidential Campaign.

(By E. D. Nauman.)

To the Freethinkers of the United States in general and those of Iowa in particular:

It is frequently said that in a government like this a man's religious or non-religious opinions ought not to be considered at all in his choice or fitness for public office; that these things are strictly private matters and should not concern the general public at all.

This is, of course, correct in theory and would be a fine thing if our religious friends could be made to understand it and act accordingly.

But, unfortunately, every Christian in office, with scarcely an exception, carries his religious opinions and prejudices into his public life and official acts and tries to, and does, make political capital out of the "religious racket" during his political campaigns. Therefore, no matter how much we, as Freethinkers and Liberals, may hate to subvert the principles on which this government is founded, the proposition is

forced onto us and we are either compelled to adopt the same tactics—fight the devil with fire—or allow the pious to make a theocracy out of the government.

Therefore, at the risk of becoming tedious to some for the subject has been pretty well discussed, I will reiterate here that so far as Mr. Bryan is concerned he would make a first-class revivalist. He says himself that he would rather talk religion than politics or anything else. I have heard him twice on the Chautauqua platform. Both times he stuffed his audience with the silliest old religious chestnuts that could be dug up out of the mouldy past. He preached from the same platform with the Rev. (?) "Billy" Sunday, and I am sorry to say that there is apparently no difference between the two in their theological opinions. Both would believe that Jonah swallowed the whale if the book said so. Both believe in the creation story of Genesis, etc. Neither knows anything of the discoveries in evolution, or the grand intellectual work of Darwin, Huxley and Haeckel. The only difference is in the style of preaching. "Billy" is the more forceful and inclined to hell-fire and vocal

pyrotechnics of that sort, while "Willie" has the smooth way of the preacher-politician. He has lately stated in a speech that he is in favor of two chaplains—a Protestant and a Catholic—for every regiment of the army, for every battleship, etc! entirely ignoring the fact that even one is a violation of the Constitution and of common sense so long as he is paid out of the public treasury. What he would do if elected President, I leave you to guess, but at any rate it seems to me no Freethinker could vote for him and ever look in the mirror afterward.

So far as I am concerned, it is true that his "belly crawling" expedition to the pope, which Dr. Wilson relates, looks bad, but, nevertheless, I have seen statements in a number of different papers and magazines to the effect that various pious organizations are trying to defeat him because they say he is an infidel. This should be enough. Straws indicate which way the wind blows. It seems to be conceded that he is a Unitarian. Of two evils we should take the least, so long as it is impossible to get a man for this exalted

(Continued on page 13.)

Hear the Other Side

Orthodox Believer Seeks Privilege of Answering Blade Writers and Takes Issue with Dr. Bowles, A. A. Snow and Others.

(By John T. Pearce.)

Having seen three copies of the Blue Grass Blade, of which you are the editor, and having read the first installment of A. A. Snow on the Christian's Messiah, I wish to say that if Mr. or Mrs. (I can't say which) Snow is a good sample in his or her ideas of the scripture quotations, as given on page 3, of May 17 issue, I feel confident that the rest of the article will not pass muster with persons who take the pains to verify the writer's quotation.

The first reference of the writer is to Micah v:2, and remains yet to be fulfilled, when Christ shall return to gather his saints, then he will rule over Israel, and gather all the tribes now scattered among the heathen nations, the ten lost tribes particularly.

The absurd idea of connecting Jesus with Judges xiii:5, exhibits a wanton desire to belittle the truth. The context plainly shows that it was Samson who was to destroy the Philistines. The birth of Samson is announced by a heavenly messenger to the mother. How you can, as one supposed to point the truth, permit writers for your paper to write and you publish such nonsense is very puzzling indeed. The book of Micah does not lie. Nor does Judges xiii:5 refer to Jesus Christ. Look for yourself and see if A. A. Snow has not overlooked Samson.

A. A. Snow writes like one who has little care for facts, which he or she makes out to be wholly false.

Thomas Paine made the gross error concerning Herod, confounding two distinct Herods to be the same man. Herod the Great was alive when Christ was born and died soon after, when Christ was very young. The writer says that both (meaning Luke and Matthew) "make out that Jesus was born during Herod's lifetime." Surely Herod the Great had a successor named also Herod Antipas, and Josephus says of this successor that Tiberius, the emperor, by action of the Roman Senate, made him a king over the Jews, and it was this kind, Herod Antipas, who caused John the Baptist to be killed; and, if I am not mistaken, Herod Agrippa and Pilate became friends on the day that Jesus was crucified, and also the King Herod, who slew James, the brother of John, both of whom were apostles. So there were three Herods, instead of one.

It is preposterous for one to say that there is a period of nine years from the birth of Christ to the death of Herod, when the taxing under Cyrenius occurred.

A. A. Snow is a very superficial reader, and I will send to you some of the scripture quotations of Mr. Thomas Paine from whom A. A. Snow has (like thousands of

others), who without testing the accuracy of Mr. Paine's scripture quotations, go blundering along through life, the champions (?) of honest (?) Freethought.

I notice in the May 5th number the article of Dr. T. J. Bowles, who makes his attack, commencing with Constantine, who was the one man who gave to the apostles from the church of god, known now as the holy Roman Catholic church, as well as her many daughters, the power to enforce church creeds, and doctrines, unknown to the apostles, and the Christians of the first, second, third and fourth centuries, which brought on the horrid wars and persecutions which have been waged under the name of Christ, the prince of peace. In all fairness, and without fear of contradiction, I ask you to exhibit one line from Christ, or his apostles, that warrants any man to charge that the Christians, prior to the fourth century, ever persecuted a man or woman, or put to death a single soul, because these persons did not accept their doctrine. On the contrary, Jews and Gentiles prior to the fourth century persecuted and slew the disciples of Christ, "as enemies of mankind."

You will find in the New Testament abundant truth as to the peaceable conduct of the disciples of Christ; and, there is abundant evidence that the apostles taught the disciples of Christ to submit to the civil governments, whether of kings or magistrates; and to submit to "every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." They were taught not to be engaged in seditions. This record may be of advantage to you, to know for yourself by a careful reading of the New Testament epistles to the several churches; and having discovered that the church of god, of which Jesus Christ, the son of god, is the head, ought not to be charged with the crimes which have disgraced the name of Christ; and in the condemnation of the religion of Jesus Christ (you no doubt innocently indulge), never was guilty of doing to a soul on earth at any stage of the existence of the church of god. It has ever been the work of apostles, be they Roman Catholic or Protestants. I am confident that when you seriously study the history of the church of god, for the years previous to the advent of the monster, Constantine, that there is now no cause to belittle the religion that Christ and his apostles instituted, near two thousand years ago. The first battle which the Roman Catholic church precipitated was over the birth of Christ. A creed was formulated which declared that Jesus Christ was conceived by the holy ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, etc. The bible everywhere places it that a woman conceives; and Mary also conceived, and not the holy ghost. Matthew says: "That which is conceived in her is of the holy ghost," and not by the holy ghost. It was a miraculous birth, accomplished by the Holy Ghost coming upon Mary, and the power of the highest (god) overshadowing her; consequently

when Matthew says "of the holy ghost," I understand that it was of divine appointment. I take no stock in creeds, but were the facts of the case properly stated it would be as follows: "Conceived by Mary, and born into the world, and is of the holy ghost, or of divine authority, from god, who creates all things according to his will."

The fact that the creeds ascribes the conception to be by the holy ghost, instead of being of the holy ghost, proves that the whole thing is wrong, and should never have been thus stated. I must ask your indulgence for inflicting upon you so long a letter, as I have written it, not for publication, but for your own reading.

I trust that you will not be offended because of my recalling to you your severe remarks upon the woman whose husband before his death enjoyed the Blue Grass Blade, informed you of the comfort he had just before going to that condition which, if you are right, there can be nothing beyond the death of any one. What harm, pray, does it do to you, and your faith, if the woman and her husband shall never see life beyond the confines of the grave? The abuse you inflict harms neither the living nor the dead, if the dead rise not. What harm can my faith in a life of eternal felicity awaits all those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the son of god? The faith which I have in the gospel of Christ rests upon the testimony of the apostles, and believe it not, your faith is also predicated on testimony; but your faith (belief) rests upon things which no one disputes, who are Christians; yet you deny and refuse the testimony of Christians and accept the testimony of infidels. You could not upon your own knowledge tell either your age, or who were your parents, still, having to rely wholly upon the testimony of those who were present at your birth, it would be an insult to you were I to say that you do not know when you were born, nor who your parents were, just because it came to you from witnesses present or told to you by your parents, or those who knew them.

Could you go into court and prove your own birth and parentage without the aid of testimony, oral or written?

I do not pretend to believe in God, or his son, Jesus the Christ, except upon the written testimony of the apostles, neither can you prove your own faith in your own pedigree except by the use of oral or written testimony of witnesses. It seem ridiculous for men to assail Christianity as being a fake, and Jesus to be a myth, when we are all creatures of faith for all which we do. The disbelievers' faith is as genuine as those who have Christian faith; the difference is not with the men but the teachings, of either infidels or Christians. Both are shut up, to take testimony from men, and there is no escape from this position.

Danbury, Conn.

Current Comment on Public Events

Bible records are given another severe shaking by investigations made in Nebraska, which throw further light on the history of the horse and progenitors in America.

While bibliologists revert to the Nile in an effort to find some papyrus or inscribed stone as tending to corroborate scripture, men of science continue their explorations with a supreme indifference and some startling results are now being recorded.

In Sioux County, Nebraska, a new quarry has been opened, and the fossil remains of prehistoric animals being uncovered. Dr. W. D. Mathews, head of Vertebrate Paleontology of the American Museum of Natural History, has just completed an examination of the relics. This rich find has been made on the farm of James H. Cook, located in the valley of L'Eau Qui Court River, and from the observations made it is given out that the horse has been an inhabitant of this continent for upwards of three millions of years, going back into the Eocene period, which is a direct challenge to bible chronology.

According to the published accounts we find that the fossil beds are in twin hills, which rise side by side like pyramids. Three or four years ago these two hills, now regarded as so rich in fossils, were practically unknown. This summer was the first time the quarry was explored extensively, though a party from the Carnegie Museum spent a part of last summer there. Now all sides of the chalk-colored hills look like the homes of cave dwellers, and it wouldn't be surprising if these twentieth century scientists have unconsciously reproduced scenes about these hills not unlike those of a million years ago, when the three-toed horse browsed all day over the neighboring grass fields.

Besides the expedition from the Museum of Natural History this summer, there was one from Yale, another from Amherst College, another from the Carnegie Museum, and a fifth from the University of Nebraska. These are only a few of the more important parties which delved for the prehistoric bones.

It is a curious fact that the Museum of Natural History has a far more complete series of skeletons of the progenitors of the horse of the Eocene period, which is fixed at some 3,000,000 years ago, than it has of the Miocene, Pliocene, or Pleistocene periods. The museums of the country have practically nothing in horses of the Pliocene period, and if among the collections just made by Dr. Mathew's party are several complete skeletons belonging to this period, the discovery will be considered by paleontologists through the world as of the utmost importance.

Bishop David H. Greer, who succeeds the late Bishop Potter as the head of the Episcopal church in New York, rushes into the limelight on the first chance, and is now out with a sensational diatribe upon unity among Protestant churches, a special theory he appears to entertain, but which is not warranted by the facts.

There can be no doubt that Bishop Greer would welcome such a church union, provided, however, that union was made under the Episcopal standard, and, provided further, that Bishop Greer was not requested to forego his particular notions in order to conform to one or other of the non-conformist sects. Church union, like church charity, is a mere dream, a sort of phantasmagoria for sentimental preachers to talk about, but never to put into practice. And woe to the day if such a unity should be effected. Church unity may go to preach about, as evincing a so-called Christian spirit, but it never gets any nearer consummation. The moment a meeting should be called to discuss the matter and to draw up an agreement for union, every mother's son and daughter in that assembly would strive to engrain his or her own notions now things secular and spiritual should be run and managed, so that only disagreement would follow. While there are commonalities in every creed, there are also differentiations, and it is the latter that give each connecting sect its standing.

What hope can even Protestants have of a leader who will assert in these days that "the church is just as availing in its spiritual power over those who not attend it as over those who do?" This is tantamount to saying that no matter whether you agree with the church or not, the church, or its preachers acting for it, are still boss of the spiritual show and will continue to rule the heavenly roost whether you like it or not. Before the advent of Paine and Ingersoll in America, and of Bradlaugh, Hoiyoake and Foote in England, such a statement might have been made without challenge or controversy, but the day is past when such pretensions can go without question, for when its full power is sifted down to a close issue, it is as feeble as a mouse in the relentless paws of some hungry feline.

But coming back to church unity. It is observed that Bishop Greer insists that the concurrent existence of so many conflicting and opposing sects serve only to "scatter the church forces and devitalize its energy. They cause a waste of vitality and of money." Bishop Greer has thus revealed the one actuating, moving impulse of the Episcopal church in desiring unity of the sects. Ignoring the fact that under Henry VIII. the church that he now represents made the first break from spiritual authority, he questions the right and justice of others to break even further away from the same institution. His sole desire is that all Christian "energy" and more especially all Christian "money" shall be directed towards his church and used by it for the saving of souls. The only way to affect unity is for all preachers, elders, bishops and other church officials to surrender their office and title thereto, and meet with other professing Christians on equal and common ground. This done they might be able to formulate some sort of a common creed, but as there is so little danger of any of the preachers, elders and bishops

taking such a course, so there is really small danger of any decisive action being taken towards effecting church unity.

* * * *

Biff! Bang!

And the Holy Roller rolled over and over on the floor.

Religion and law do not run serenely together in these days, as is evidenced by the action of Magistrate Higginbotham, of New York, who, resenting the conduct of a Holy Roller preacher, by the name of Howard Dunwiddie, landed a blow upon the latter which felled him to the floor of the court room.

It is reported that Dunwiddie and seven women members of his sect had been arrested for disorderly conduct and taken before the court of Magistrate Higginbotham in Brooklyn. Dunwiddie demanded to have a private talk with the magistrate and when the latter refused to oblige him, Dunwiddie according to many witnesses, struck the magistrate on the neck. The blow was a light one and Magistrate Higginbotham recovered himself quickly and retaliated by striking Dunwiddie square on the jaw. The Holy Roller staggered backwards for ten feet and then fell in a heap. As he rose to his feet and tried to flee he was captured by a policeman and dragged into the court room, where Magistrate Higginbotham again took the bench and held the prisoner in \$1,500 bail on a charge of assault.

There was another sensational happening during the afternoon, when the Holy Rollers were arraigned. Miss Elizabeth Robinson, high priestess of the order, was accused by the magistrate of having circulated the report in the court room that he had attempted to hug and kiss her while she was holding a private audience with him in his chambers. Two reporters, who were in the room during his private talk, testified that Magistrate Higginbotham had not tried to hug or kiss the high priestess, and Magistrate Higginbotham demanded that the prisoner explain her statement. On advice of her lawyer, Miss Robinson refused to comply, so the magistrate held her in \$5,000 bail on a charge of contempt of court and \$1,500 bail on a charge of conducting a disorderly house.

Great is the charm of orthodox religion, and the public may derive a valuable lesson from this incident.

Silk Dresses Given Away

An opportunity of a life time for women who love good clothes.

High School girls can obtain their graduation dresses without cost; working girls and married women may secure fine fall or summer dresses.

Large list of patterns to select from. Bona fide offer—no fraud, no grafting or disagreeable duties to perform.

For full particulars send name, address and a two-cent postage stamp to

ED. S. SHEAGREEN

247 Hennepin Ave.
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.

Some Social Sidelights

Duly Ordained Freethought Chaplain Gives Expression to His Views in Poetry and Prose.

(By Albert Johnson.)

On July 31 two men who made murder a profession—fiends, "gas-pipe thugs"—were jerked to Mary's son—Mary, as you remember, was "overshadowed by a ghost who descended in bodily shape like a dove," Luke iii., 22, and founded the Christian religion.

They were assisted into immortal life by two priests of the most corrupt organization in the world—birds of a feather helping each other out.

What a mockery! Bah! It smells of the rottenness of religion and Rome.

Brother Clark will join in singing the "Doxology:"

"Jerked to Jesus," "Holy Saviour," with those priestly Roman prayers,
They are happy now with angels, up those golden flight of stairs.
With their hands deep-dyed with blood-stains they're happy now above,
With Mary's "Holy Ghost" son and his pa, a "god of love."

Chorus—All Sing.

Two priests of Rome assisted them home
To a spiritual life beyond;
At the end of a noose a man turned them loose,
For of murder they were overfond.

Samson A Nazarite

The Story of the Foxes' Tails and Other Myths Given a Hard Jolt.

(By John F. Clarke.)

Samson was "a Nazarite from the womb."

A Nazarite is a fellow that lets his hair grow for the glory of God. God reciprocated and gave Samson strength for growing hair.

Samson had seven locks, and a Comanche Indian could have scalped him seven times for the glory of Manitou. Samson judged Israel for twenty years. He was a peculiar chap, and especially strong on the last half of peculiar. An angel of god visited his mother, who was barren, and made her fertile. The angel of god then went up in smoke. Samson fell in love with a Philistine lady and made his mother and father go and fetch her to him to wife. Her father afterward gave her to Samson's companion, while Samson was out killing people for god's glory. Samson took a peculiar revenge. He had a young lion "roar against him" and slew the lion, and the bees inhabited the lion's carcass and Samson eat some of the honey and made a riddle and offered a change of raiment to those who would guess the riddle within seven days. His wife beguiled the answer from him and made the thirty young men wise and they guessed it, and he gave the world the famous epigram: "If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle." He went down and slew thirty other Philistines and took their duds and paid his bet like a man.

When "his heifer" had been leased to

The managers of the Republican machine opened their convention with prayer by a priest of Rome—birds of a feather again together. Evidently the prayer was heard in Rome, for they selected Taft, first Ambassador of the United States to Rome, and a tool of Rome. I suppose now all American sovereigns of the Republican superstition will fall over themselves to vote for Taft and Rome. As an Italian monk of the sixteenth century said: "The people are a beast of muddy brain."

What was the reason you did not give the name of that Washington navy yard man who challenged you to publish his letter? Was he afraid of it? No doubt many of the Blade's "illiterate correspondents" would like to open up a correspondence with him and imbibe some of the wisdom of the man who believes that a virgin gave birth to a child sired by a ghost; one who thought it strange that "god almighty did not strike Brother Clarke dead" for his religious ideals. I see that John is still in the ring and not losing any sleep on "god's wrath." Evidently the writer is one of the pope's Irish, under spiritual control of some of those old members of the Inquisition. His letter breathes their spirit.

Evidently the United States Government don't feel quite strong enough yet to suppress the Blade. Wait till that Penrose bill gets in full working order. We will then have a chance to see if the infidels of the country have any sand.

'Frisco. Cal.

THE CHAPLAIN.

was a match for him and got his combination. She was too foxy for him.

When the Nazarite of god had his hair cut off he lost the ability to abuse foxes, and history closed its page to him. Any one who doubts that Samson tied the tails of 300 foxes is a heretic. Any one that doubts his tying the tails of 298, is a sceptic; of 250, an infidel; of the lot, an Atheist. I am a heretic 300 times on this business. The women of Israel must have been exceedingly treacherous, according to the life of Samson. Every damsel betrayed him. His wife told the riddle, another told the gatekeeper at Gaza to pen him up, and Deliah held him while his hair was cut. A history that would tell such lies about foxes and so many of them would not spare the girls.

When a woman loves a man she usually "betrays" some one else. The writer of "Judges" was a nature fakir. He showed the "nature" of foxes and girls and lions as it is not, was not and will not be.

DAVE'S LETTER.

To His Dear Heavenly Father.

(Copyright applied for, 1908, by Franklin H. Heald.)

My deer heavenly father—How did you ever chance to think of making a woman for Adam? Did it just hapen to pop into your hed? I asked Joe about it but he got as mad as a hornet and said it was nun of my bisness and you had a rite to make what you pleased and if it didnt glorify you, then you had a rite to git jelous and angry and kill it if you wanted two. Papa dont think so, but then he is not a christian. He dont like the smel of them and dont like the smel of a stable much. He says nature dont do things by chance and never repents itself like you do, because it has know mind to change; but he says its laws are unchangeable. Joe says he wishes I was his boy for an our or too and he gesses he wood convinse me that you no what you are about. He says Solomon was a profit and was inspired when he sed: "Spare the rod and spoil the child," but Papa says he was an old billy gote and had to thousand wives and each one of them had 10 children and Solomon bot rods by the cord and hired strangers by the month to whip them. Papa says "Spare the child and spoil the rod" is a heap better reiligeon than Christianity. He says of cours if you wan to make a christian of a boy youv' got to thrash him and keep him from asking about things. Did you ever thrash Jesus? Is that the reson the Devil noes so much more? When he was little did you answer his questions? How much older is he than Jesus? Is he your first-born? Who was his mother? Was Dowie one of your boys? Is Louis-the-lite, that lives here, your baby? He says he is god. Why dont you strike him ded for such blassfemy He looks as if he was borned in a stable and lived in one yet, and he parts his hare in the middel to look like Jesus, but the wimmen do not cry on his feat nor put greese on him. People wood of hung him tho several times if he hadent got away and hid. As ever, DAVE.

BLUE GRASS BLADE.

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One inch, single column, 1 insertion, 50 cents; one month, or four insertions, \$1.00; six months, \$5.00; one year, \$8.00.
 Quarter column, single, 1 insertion, \$2.00; one month, \$4.00; six months, \$20.00; one year, \$30.00.
 Half column, whole column, or larger advertisements at special rates upon application.
 The publisher has the right to reject any and all advertisements offered.

GENERAL BUSINESS RULES.

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Blade will be discontinued at the expiration of the term for which the subscription has been paid up in advance. The address slip on the paper will show subscribers the date of expiration of subscription. Back numbers, or numbers omitted will be sent, if asked for, upon renewal in case of discontinuance.

SHOULD ANY SUBSCRIBER change his or her address, advise this office, giving both old and new address, as desired.

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ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BLUE GRASS BLADE, P. O. Box 393, Lexington, Ky.

HUMANIZING HUMANITY.

The work of Freethought is to humanize humanity. The labor of the church has been and is now to animalize it.

One of the most potent results of the adoption of science and philosophy as humanizing agencies is the abandonment of the idea that the orthodox church was the sole repository and depository of the truth.

The difference between philosophy and theology is that the former advances a conclusion as merely provisional, subject to change while the latter asserts that all its conclusions are final, irrevocable and unalterable. For the reasons here stated philosophy must always and ever be progressive, while theology must be stationary, having reached the full limit of its possibilities. We cannot move beyond finality. That is the end. Following the advance of philosophy the discovery has been made that the assumptions made by theologians that they are the custodians of infallible truths, is a monstrous absurdity, untenable and untrue. Under the guidance and tutelage of theology the race has been plunged in war, murder and other forms of violence, unbecoming human beings, a proceeding not known among other animals of earth. This would make even an ape more human than men. But men are not wholly to blame. The responsibility rests altogether upon a coterie of false teachers and prophets

who have misinformed the people through a false system of education. Murder and the art of war were not inherently within the nature of man, but are the direct results of false economic notions, an achievement wrought by a culture in the technique of arms and implements of war. Even up to and including the present time, these have ranked among the intellectual labors of the race. Men still glorify war. Military heroes are accorded popular ovations and demonstrations. The arts of peace have been made altogether subservient thereto.

Just as the truly scientific mind rejoices when a new light is put about or thrown upon already accepted truths, as to give them an entirely new aspect, so will the philosophical mind gladly hail the day when more humanizing influences will be thrown about the race and theological considerations wholly ignored. There can be no permanent peace until the teachings of theology have been supplanted by the promptings of a wise and beneficent philosophy.

The world needs more humanity. This can only come through spreading the principles of Freethought. The legitimate products of Christianity may be seen everywhere. Race divisions and even divisions of the same race into classes and castes. Christianity appeals to the most abject passions for its support. This is animalism. Sired by pride, mothered by impurity, what else could we expect from such a source!

It is recorded that when Huxley began his exposition of the Darwinian theory of the descent of man, an English bishop, at Oxford, denounced Darwinism in bitter terms, and among other things charged that Darwin sought to put a limit upon "god's great glory" and proceeded to congratulate himself that he was "descended from an ape." History also records the reply made by Huxley, when his attention had been directed to the statement, which was as follows:

"If I had to choose, I would prefer to be a descendant of a humble monkey than of a man who employs his knowledge and eloquence in misrepresenting those who are wearing out their lives in the search for truth."

Such is the position of Freethought. Far better to be of humble origin and be able to hold up a record of wonderful progress and advancement, than to be of perfect creation and to have fallen from such a high estate. Better to have come up than to have moved downward. In the light of growth we can understand humanity with all its failings and shortcomings. As a fallen and humiliated being we place a cloud of gloom about the race. Then let us unite in spreading these humanizing doctrines of Freethought. Let us be more persistent and energetic in our work. It is the Freethinkers of the world who have led in the march of human progress, and but for their labors men would still be animals.

In ten thousand years man has not been able to decide even the tariff question, yet any fool preacher can tell us off-hand just how the universe came into existence and explain the plan of omnipotence.

THEOLOGICAL SIDESHOWS.

What is the church of the future to be?

Radical changes in the form of church service and Christian worship are appearing in the most unexpected places, and ministers of the gospel, high in place and favor, are bending the spiritual to meet the demands of the material.

Once the church takes to innovation and improvement as a means of self-preservation, ignoring its past attitude of self-importance and sufficiency, by catering to the popular will, the end of theological dogma is marked and the day of intellectual progress begins to dawn.

It is evident that Christianity is now passing through the same intellectual conflict that marked the paganism of Greece and Rome, when, by social contact, assisted by that intense desire to control the masses through a pretense of yielding to popular demand, they fell before the advancing thought of the new faith and became victims to their own incapacity. Enlightened intelligence has exposed the imbecility of all the creeds, demonstrated their impotency for moral improvement, exploded the god myth and placed man at the topmost pinnacle of existence. The church feels the force of the conflict. Its pretensions to a sanctified spirit of extreme holiness, a sort of spiritual superiority, are not capable of exacting that public homage and allegiance it once commanded, and it is now engaged in a mighty struggle to keep up appearances and maintain a semblance of its former power and glory. And the church that will not progress, the church that refuses to keep pace with the progressive temper of the age, must perish, while they that are content to sail slowly along in the rear of human intelligence will gradually assume a higher and better nature until their preachers will become teachers and instead of seeking to placate an angry god in behalf of a suffering humanity, they will know that humanity is all there is worth striving for.

Nor is the church alone at war with the intellectual forces of the age, but the churches are at war with each other. Sect contends against sect and what one preacher, as a representative of the church, commends, another preacher, also a representative of the church, condemns. Hardly any two preachers in the land are agreed upon what course of policy should be pursued, and this indecision, this halting upon the brink, is one of the surest signs of intellectual weakness, stagnation and decay. Not one preacher in a thousand can be brought into the arena who is capable of making an intelligent defense of his position, acceptable to the great masses of thinking people. Theologically speaking, not one in ten thousand has advanced an inch beyond the doctrine and thought of the barbaric past, in which his creed was formulated. While all things else have gone forward and onward by leaps and bounds, theology remains where it was when originally invented.

Then to what is the church coming? As an institution the church will be with us for many years to come, but

its policies will undergo such a radical and striking change that the church a century hence will not be the church of today even as the church of today is not what it was a century ago. We can, to a great extent, judge of the future by the past, and from what has happened, and from what is at present happening, it does not require any great amount of foresight to fairly predict the church conditions of the future. From congregational singing of hymns and psalms we came to church choirs; from church choirs we passed on to orchestral music; from this to a brass band; and the musical features constitute the most attractive portions of the service. Now we witness the introduction of the phonograph, smoking concerts, vaudeville actors and actresses, professionals engaged to whistle hymns instead of having the people to sing them, and even a soda fountain is reported to have been installed in a church, somewhere, whereby ice-cold lemonade and fizzes are served to the members of the congregation as they occupy their seats in church.

Last, but not least important, in the suggested improvements, innovations—call it what you will—comes the declaration of Rt. Rev. Charles D. Williams, the Episcopal bishop of Michigan, who intimates that the usual sermon might be dispensed with and some more attractive feature be substituted for it. From this it would appear that anything, everything, must, or should, be tried to keep the people creed-bound and herd them in the walls of some church. But with it all there appear marked signs of an admitted inferiority, an admitted incapacity. Let the changes come. Introduce minstrel features and comic opera, but until the church gets down to bed-rock principles and can fairly grasp and understand the law that governs existence, it must fail, as other and similar institutions have failed before it. More of the natural and less of the supernatural is the constant demand of humanity. Every humanizing effort must be directed toward the natural, and this implies that in our consideration for the welfare of man we must ignore god.

SCHOOL BEGINS ITS WORK.

Scholarships are issued.

The first series of examination questions have been mailed out to students.

These acts put the Correspondence School in actual working order.

Students are now at work upon the problems given them and in thirty days their answers will be back here for inspection, correction and grading.

The school is yet an experiment.

It will keep going, however, but its success will altogether depend upon the reception given to it by the Free-thinkers of the country.

With some misgivings concerning our ability to get a start in this important venture, the Blade is well pleased with the patronage many of its friends have bestowed. The number of pupils enrolled is not up to our expectations

by a long way, and for this year we shall, in all probability, lose money on the venture. None the less we propose to go at the matter in a business-like way, and give every student full value for the money paid. We feel confident that at the end of the first year, just as soon as results can be definitely given, our friends will realize the full importance of this method of propaganda and rally to its better support.

By the time this issue is being read the students in the school will be at work on the first collection, or what are designated as Series A, of the examination questions in Geology, Astronomy, Botany and Zoology. These are the most important of the natural sciences and form a groundwork for the more technical branches. There are twenty questions in each subject making a total of eighty to be answered within the thirty days accorded them, at the end of which the work done will be graded according to merit. Nine monthly examinations constitute the year's work, at the close of which each student will be invited to write a brief treatise upon what he or she has learned, contrasted with biblical and theological teaching, to be published in the Blade. Each student will then be given advice for an extension of the same branches of study by taking up the different branches in a more advanced form on their own account.

All students who have enrolled this year will, for the next course of study, be instructed in Philosophy, secular and sacred History, Theology, and Biblical Literature. Each student can then elaborate for himself or herself upon the proper comparisons to be made. The third and closing year of the entire course will be to give a polish and tone to the knowledge thus obtained, with expression, construction and literary culture.

Intending students, who desire to take the course, are now urged to send for books and examination papers, and the school will use extra pains to enable them to catch up.

The total cost of the entire first year's course is only \$15.39, which includes tuition, text-books and express and mail charges.

FREETHOUGHT AND SOCIALISM.

Upon our own suggestion a large number of subscribers have sent up names and addresses of friends for the purpose of sending sample copies of the Blade, and considerable good has been done thereby. Occasionally we receive a communication from one of the list, announcing their allegiance to socialism in preference to Freethought, urging that economic freedom, once won, will abolish religious superstition. This is like putting the horse in the shafts the wrong way to.

For centuries the Christian superstition has been the dominant factor in government. For centuries it was the factor and the only factor. Temporal matters were subordinated to the spiritual and statutory enactments, to say nothing of imperial ukase, were drawn and formulated for the sole and express purpose of strengthening

the church and bolstering its sordid superstitions. The welfare of the people was never considered. It was the cause of religion and religion only. Kingcraft and priestcraft formed an exclusive partnership. A sort of close corporation. They planned and labored together. All men and all women were church members. But few dared to entertain a doubt, and those who did doubt dared not give utterance thereto. At the same time all were slaves to the church power and the money power. The king and the priest played a losing game only into each other's hands. Economic freedom was never dreamed of. The system had become so firmly established that to question its justness was a heresy.

When the clouds broke, what appeared? Not economic freedom. It was religious freedom. Minus the means of subsistence the people still remained economic slaves long after religious reformation had been accomplished. The people began to draw away from the temples. They began to think. Other wrongs dawned upon them. From religious matters they turned their attention to political matters. Perceiving the drift of the popular mind, the king appealed to the priest, and the latter used his offices to terrify the people with vague threats of spiritual torment to be submissive to political authority. But freedom had gained a foothold. Freedom moves forward, not backward. The church realized what this movement meant, and it arrayed a bitter opposition. This opposition held the people back for ages, and just in proportion as religious freedom became more universally adopted, the opportunity presented itself for studying remedies for political wrongs. Revolution followed revolution. The church was always on the side of the reactionaries. The history of our own country gives ample demonstration of that fact. Today less than one-third maintain an open allegiance with the church. The bulk of national intelligence is outside the pale of the church. But for this fact the present agitation for economic reforms would not be tolerated, and it is a strange aberration of mental light that leads to the conclusion that economic freedom must precede religious freedom.

Suppose all advocacy of Freethought should be eliminated from the republic by law or executive order! What would happen? Socialism and every other ism now appearing would be instantly shut off by force. The demand for religious freedom preceded the demand for economic freedom and through all the centuries the latter has been trailing in the wake of the former. Freethought was in America before socialism. It must go before socialism always. Whenever a socialist affirms that he has no use for the advocacy of Freethought he is retarding the very movement that made his own advocacy possible. Socialism may be an effective remedy for existing political ills, and it may not. At best the theory is an untried experiment. We do know that Freethought is stable and permanent, and that it will continue to be though the universe oppose it. Even socialism has been compelled to encounter the strenuous opposition of the church. This is admitted by

and. Freethought has enabled the socialist movement to grow by its open and unrelenting opposition to the church. It has also liberalized popular thought and prepared the ground for the constructionist to work upon.

Then what foolish fantasy is this of supposing that economic freedom will lead to the destruction of theological superstition? It will never do. First break the chains that fetter the human mind and encourage independent thought, and then the day will soon dawn when political freedom will be accorded a public hearing. It must, of a necessity, however, be led by an era of emancipation from orthodoxy and priestcraft, and the sooner our socialist friends realise this fact the sooner will their dreams of liberty become a realization.

Paine realised this, and he labored to destroy the power of the church in politics. His compatriots were also of the same notion, and though not so open as he, admitted the necessity. Where would the liberal propaganda in America be today but for the labors of Ingersoll? No man in all America did more to liberalize human thought than he. That liberalization was particularly aimed at the churches, at the superstition it taught, and the practices it indulged in. And where was socialism at this time? Simply nil!

A BUSINESS PROPOSITION.

Lexington papers reporting a recent Sunday sermon by a local preacher, quoted him as preaching on "A Partnership With God," and saying:

"In forming this partnership, each partner must put in something to give the firm a working capital. Man must bring himself. All that he has. Man must put in his heart, his soul, his mind, his strength, and all his possessions, aye, all that he hath. God will put all else in that may be necessary."

Although we were deeply impressed upon reading the above at the gross inequality of the terms proposed, we could not help thinking that the end of the quotation would have been an excellent and business-like stopping point for the purpose of taking up the usual collection.

But what a partnership proposition! Who would be willing to enter any business combine on such terms? One partner called upon to give up "all that he hath" while the other is permitted to come in on equal terms by merely giving up what else "may be necessary." When we consider that the parson talks for himself and not for god we are able to understand the matter in a vastly different light.

Unfortunately for these gentlemen of broadcloth and white chokers men have different views upon business matters than they. Men know that parsons make it their business to talk for cash, and they also know that cash is too hard to get out of any business to give it all to the parson.

We fear the church must yet depend upon the widows' mites and children's pennies.

OUR SUBSCRIPTION LIST.

The recent financial depression has forced the Blade into a hard and desperate struggle, but with returning relief in industrial circles we hope to recoup the losses sustained. While it may not be "policy" to take such a step, yet we deem it better to be honest with our friends that they make the necessary effort to straighten out their accounts with the Blade office. Casting policy to the winds we wish to say that upon an examination of our books we find that no less than 1,127 subscribers are delinquent. Some owe for two and three years. Many owe for one year. No matter what comes or goes the Blade is forced to meet its current expenses, and with such a delinquency you may imagine what a difficult time we are having to keep up. Could we secure but 50 per cent. of what is owing to us on subscriptions alone we could make the Blade still better and give an improved service from week to week.

Subscribers may readily observe by the date given on their mailing tab whether they are included in this delinquent list or not, and the proper thing to do would be to remit the amount indicated thereon.

We know, from experience, that the vast majority of such cases arises from neglect and oversight. For this reason we do not like to stop sending the paper. The new postal regulations will compel such a course unless some provision be made to pay up the delinquencies.

Now friends, do not neglect this matter any longer. It is a serious issue with the Blade and we feel sure that none of its friends would like to see the Blade suffer from such a cause.

Now, then, let everybody pull together. Give a long pull and a strong pull and send the Blade's circulation above high water mark during the coming fall and winter. Oh, if we could only put some of our own enthusiasm into the mind and heart of many Freethinker.

"Marriage and Divorce," the admirable pamphlet by Josephine K. Henry, contains much valuable information on this important subject. It must be more widely distributed. Send 25 cents to Mrs. Henry at Versailles, Ky., and secure one. It is well worth the money, and offers you some instructive reading matter.

Friends, Americans, and Citizens, to paraphrase the famous speech of Marcus Antonius, it is the stern duty of all to do everything possible to make that Canal Dover gathering of Freethinkers a success, and to this end the Blade urges upon all who can attend to do so, and to send a donation, however small, to those in charge thereof, that the expenses may be fully met without entailing a hardship upon anyone.

Two Freethought Conventions

Canal Dover, Ohio, September 5---9

MATERIALIST ASSOCIATION Program

SATURDAY NIGHT, SEPTEMBER 5.—Round Table Conference in parlors of Central Hotel to outline convention work and discuss methods of propaganda.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6.

Buckeye Secular Union at Hardesty's Opera House.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7.—Morning Session.

1. Election of chairman of convention.
2. Chairman's opening address.
3. Secretary's report of membership and finance.
4. Appointment of Committees.
5. Discussion of members present, and reading of letters from absent members upon methods for the promotion and welfare of the Association and its propaganda.

AFTERNOON SESSION

1. Reports of Committees.
2. General discussion on propaganda with such recommendations as may be deemed advisable.
3. Introduction of secretaries, writers, delegates, fraternal delegates from other organizations, for five minute talks on any subject.

EVENING SESSION.

1. Address—"Sunday Meetings"Eliza Mowry Bliven
2. AddressDr. T. J. Bowles
"The basis of our hopes is the law of progress."
3. AddressJohn R. Charlesworth
"Life, death and immortality, or Materialism v. Theology."
4. Debate—"For and Against Socialism."

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8.—Morning Session.

1. General discussion "Do we need any constitution in addition to our invitation and application blanks"? Shall we introduce the words "I believe into all future blanks," before the words, "There is no god or future life?"
2. Election of officers for ensuing term.
3. Final reports of Committees and action on propaganda work.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Woman's Meeting.—This is not only for materialist and agnostic women but for all women promoters of the various moral, educational, political and philanthropic movements. We want to bring these women together at Canal Dover and each explain their methods, objects and plans.

During this day examples will be given of the meetings proposed that should take the place of religious services in all churches.

EVENING SESSION.

1. Address—(Selected)Jesse White
2. AddressOtto Wettstein
"The Axe to the Root, or a God Impossible in Nature."
3. Address—"The Reign of King Humbug".....Dr. J. B. Wilson
4. Debate—"Woman Suffrage and Prohibition."

All members and women speakers for Tuesday's meetings should send their names to the Secretary.

MRS. ELIZA MOWRY BLIVEN,

PROGRAM OF CONVENTION

Buckeye Secular Union Arranges for Splendid Gathering at Canal Dover, O., Sept. 6.

MATERIALIST ASSOCIATION ON HAND.

The sixth annual session of the Buckeye Secular Union will be held in Hardesty's Opera House, Third Street, Canal Dover, Ohio, Sunday, September 6th, E. M. 308.

PROGRAM.

Morning Session.

- 9:00.—Address of Welcome.....Samuel Toomey
ResponseOtto Wettstein
10:00.—Report of the Secretary.....Miss Lou Lawrence
Report of the Treasurer.....Mr. J. Wilbur White
10:30.—Election of Officers for Ensuing Year.
11:00.—Short Speech, or Round Table Discussion, by Members.
12:00.—Adjourn for Luncheon.

Afternoon Session.

- 1:30.—Why I am a Freethinker.....Mr. A. C. Narragon
2:00.—Lesson from "Paine".....Mr. William McCarthy
2:15.—What Is Superstition.....W. S. English, Esq.
2:45.—What Is Education.....Mr. Jesse P. White
3:15.—The Basis of Our Hopes Is the Law of Progress
Dr. T. J. Bowles
4:30.—Trolley ride to Tuscora Park.

Evening Session.

- 7:30.—Idealism.....Mr. Walter C. Hardesty
7:50.—What Women Ought to do Instead of Church Work
Mrs. Eliza Mowry Bliven
8:30.—Secular Philosophy vs. Christian Faith.
Mr. John R. Charlesworth, Editor Blue Grass Blade

The following committees are herewith appointed:

Organization—Eliza M. Bliven, Gus A. Parr, Benjamin Baldwin, Esq.

Resolutions—Dr. J. T. Bowles, Helen M. Lucas, A. C. Narragon.

Press—John R. Charlesworth, Lou Lawrence, E. M. Lowe, Wm. McCarthy, Chas. Betcher.

Finance—Samuel Toomey, Anna H. McGuire, Joseph E. Johnston.

Entertainment—Walter C. Hardesty, Belle M. Converse, Alfred M. Stowe.

NOTICE.

The Central Hotel will be headquarters, and a special rate of \$1.50 per day will be given to those attending the convention.

The Materialist Association will meet in Canal Dover on the 7th and 8th of September, and will be present at the meeting of the Buckeye Secular Union. The two events cover three days. The M. A. will also meet in the Hardesty Opera House. The program for this convention will be announced in a few days.

Everybody invited and free discussion, free press and free speech is our motto.

WISDOM NOT IN FEAR OF GOD.

Aked, the Imported Gospel Shark, Taken to Task for Some of His Sayings.

(By F. B. Hall.)

The Rev. Aked, who was recently imported by Rockefeller to preach the "true way to heaven" in New York, is reported as saying there was a large falling off in church attendance and membership, both in this country and Europe, which portends destruction of church activities. This was not due to atheism, for that had never effected the church to any extent. In interviewing many people he found they were as religious as ever only they were careless and indifferent in relation to church matters, making no effort to help the clergy or church, which to Rev. Aked, was a very bad thing. Did the Rev. Aked judge these people alright? Is not his religion at fault and not the people? Have not the people for 1,500 years drank deeply of the bitter cup of superstition, draining it again and again to its very dregs? Is it not about time they gained a little wisdom?

The trouble is this, which Rev. Aked cares not to notice; the people have evolved to a condition in which they have discovered several important things, much to their benefit, namely, that all religions were man-made for the special purpose to subsidize and rob the people, whose souls were held so dear. They have also found out that Christianity is founded on the mistakes and cruelties of the Jewish god, who damned the man for all eternity, but could not save his soul, only by the help of a saviour—his son.

The people have also found out that god's wrath, which had ever been the dominant attribute of this god, and his other half—the devil—which have been so loudly proclaimed from the housetops for nearly 2,000 years, to show the mercy and love of their possessor, are as impotent as his power to have had all men born to right conduct—needing no saviour or religion. That endless hell, where the wicked—those who do not accept this Jewish god and his bible plan—gnash their teeth in pain and misery, forever and ever, to the glorification of the sainted onlookers, is no more, is never to be a factor with the devil to drive people insane again. They never existed only to frighten ignorant humanity out of reason, rights and property. Alas! Too well the plan succeeded, as the Rev. Aked well knows, and he wishes still longer to hold them for their money and souls' sake.

As long as the church could keep up a belief in hell and the devil, the devotees overlooked the crude, puerile plan for salvation on which Christianity is founded, and subscribe to it by faith and money, so they might escape this endless hell, prepared by a merciful, loving god! When the people learned that the bible and god's power were limited and hell never existed, then the conditions, as the Rev. Aked reports, came to the surface. This is the true reason for the church decadence, and all the reason.

"The fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom," was a lie first, last, and forever. Augusta, Mich.

THE PENDING POLITICAL BATTLE.

(Continued from page 4.)

place who understands the principles of a secular government.

To the Iowa Freethinkers especially I wish to say that the Democratic nominee

for governor, Mr. F. E. White, is from my county (Keokuk), I might almost say my neighbor. He has the reputation here of being a Freethinker and judging from what I know of him I think he would be absolutely fair, as between Freethinkers and religionists, if elected governor. He has been in Congress and so far as I am aware did not pander to the unjust demands continually made by the pious element. One thing is certain: When our committee on speakers for the Fourth of July celebration went to see him in regard to a speech for that day, it was reported they found he was out in the corn field plowing corn, had taken his dinner with him, and was "busy for all day." I think a man of that kind has not got so far away from the soil but what he is safe and worthy of a Liberal's support.

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Let us tear up party lines and "strings" sufficiently to vote intelligently, at least.

Sigourney, Ia.

THE BUCKEYE SECULAR UNION.

Some of the Reasons Why It Should Be Well Attended—Are You Going?

(By Dr. T. J. Bowles.)

Every Freethinker within a radius of two hundred miles should strain a point to be present in Canal Dover on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Buckeye Secular Union, which occurs on September 5th and 6th.

The brave men and grand women who have expended time, money and energy in the organization of this great movement, should receive the hearty support and enthusiastic co-operation of every friend and reader of the Blade, and I sincerely hope that every person who reads these lines will feel in duty bound to attend this meeting, and make it memorable in the history of Freethought. When societies like the Buckeye Secular Union are organized in every State in the Union, Rationalism will dominate the public mind, and the battle for mental liberty will soon be crowned with a glorious victory.

A Believer Criticised.

E. LOS ANGELES, CAL.—In the Blade of July 19 I find much that is excellent. Mr. Greir Kidder is at the very top as a caustic critic. I like the very liberal (for a Christian) tone of Mr. Clarence S. Johnson's letter. To me the bible, Christian god is an impossibility, because he would have to be a perfect god and a perfect devil at the same time. There are many things he could not do, yet he has all power. He could not drive the inhabitants out of the valley because they had chariots of iron. He could not do wonderful work because of unbelief. He cannot save many because they are "free moral agents." He is all powerful yet he cannot influence them, draw, or contrast heaven and hell to them plain enough to get them to choose happiness. Oh, there are very many things that this all-powerful god cannot do. Then he is impartial. Yet he showed himself to many, talked with them, ate and drank with them, preformed (?) many wonderful miracles before them. Let Thomas thrust his hand in the hole in his side, etc., etc. Will he give me the same evidence? No. I must take "say so" or be damned. He was absolutely good and kind, yet he made a bargain with the devil to torture his most

faithful servant Job. He destroyed both the innocent and the guilty, human and brute, at the time of the flood. Then he set the rainbow in the sky as a promise of his wonderful forbearance that he would not again destroy the world by flood. Wonderful mercy! He would burn it the next time he got extra mad. He was a perfect god yet he got angry and said evil things of Ninevah, then repented and went back on what he had said he would do and did it not: As bad as a man. Then he repented that he had made man. Had he made a mistake? He is fair and just. He curses all mankind because one man sinned. He visits the sins of the fathers on the children. Is such a god just. If he does not do this direct, as the bible says, these injustices are accomplished through the laws. Of course, he made the laws and enforces them or he is not supreme ruler. Then this just god punishes the innocent to clear the guilty. The only book the Christians have to prove either a god or a future life tells us that there is no future life: "Man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; as one dieth, so dieth the other." Read Job. 7-9, also Eccl. 9-5, also Is., 26-14, and many others. Thus you see the bible plainly teaches that death ends all. Everything in nature seems to teach the same. We can not get a trace of evidence beyond the grave. Then why believe it? We would like to believe in a happy future life. Yet if god is unchangeable what hope have we that he would or could do better in another world? Would he take away our free moral agency in the next world? If we sin right up to death and are free, will not some of us sin in the future? All biblical scholars claim that King James' version of the bible is fallible. We know that it contains many contradictions. Then where is the foundation for our faith? Let us build on something substantial. Let us cling to the faith that nature seems to prove. That plant, insect, beast, human, all have life, intelligence in their order, all apparently cease to exist except as elements in nature. Then let us work with all our energies for this world, do all the good we can right here and now; it may be our last chance. Suppose that all of the energy now devoted to uphold the supernatural was suddenly ural, what a change for the better there would be.—S. F. DAVIS.

Student Gets Text-Books.

SPOKANE, WASH.—I received your letter advising me to get three of the text-books: Geology, Astronomy and Botany. Enclosed please find mail order for \$3.78, which will pay for books and express charges. Papa has been to the Pacific Coast for the last two months and so neither of us have read the Blue Grass Blade to find out the plans of the school or when you would have enough scholars to start work. We will send the \$10 tuition fee later on.—BESSIE GEDDES.

After rain comes sunshine.

A good life keeps off wrinkles.

Perhaps hinders folks from lying.

A life in continual need is half death.

Every man has his faults.

The Blade's Correspondence

Wants a Joint Debate.

WANRIKA, OKLA.—Perhaps you remember me and perhaps you do not. I am the man that got up the debate between you and the Rev. Wilkinson at Oscar, I. T., several years ago. At that time I lived near there and you were at my house. I now live six miles west of Ryan, the place where you got off. Since that time we have had several debates. The infidel side has been represented by L. S. Welch. Welch is well up but he lets the Campbellites off too easy. When they get through with their little argument they leave the proposition and jump on Paine or Ingersoll, and when I call them to order he says "Let them go," so pretty near all the time is taken up wrangling over Paine and Ingersoll. Moore was here once and debated with Wilkinson, but he let Wilkinson run it over him. So neither side was represented, but Wilkinson got the victory. That failure on the party of Moore was the worst set-back we ever had here. I would like to see you get ahold of Wilkinson about one week, as he thinks he is the champion debater since he got such a victory over Moore. The last debate we had was at Springtown, Texas. That was between Rev. A. W. Young and Welch. What do you think about coming out here and holding about six days' debate with some of the Campbellites' big guns? They are the only creed that will debate with infidels. I think Comanche, Okla., would be the best place. It is twenty-five miles from me on the Rock Island Road and a hotbed of Campbellites, and the people would turn out to hear a debate there. I don't know that I can raise the necessary expenses, but will try if you can come some time this year. I am a poor man and the expenses have been falling pretty heavy on me, so I can not foot the bill alone, but we have got some good, staunch infidels here that will help out. So if you think you can arrange to come let me know about what it will cost. When Moore came out here he had a pass for advertising the railroad, so it did not cost us much. There is a new firm in our town in the saddle and harness business. They are full-blood atheists. I wish you would send them some sample copies of the Blade—some back numbers. I think you will get a new subscriber by so doing. I consider there have been great improvements in the Blade since you have been editor.—H. A. HOUSER.

From One of the Old School.

LANDIS, N. C.—You will find inclosed stamps for which send me Blades containing Col. R. G. Ingersoll's picture. If my order is too late send Blades of next issue and oblige a poor but never failing Free-thinker of the atheistic school.—J. A. CORRIHER.

Student Well Pleased.

SIOUX FALLS, S. D.—As per your advice I enclose herewith money order for \$1.61

for the text book on Zoology. Kindly have same sent to me at your earliest convenience and greatly oblige me. I will soon have a few new subscribers for the Blade. I shall do all I can to help our good cause. Thanking you for favors extended to me—R. VOGEL.

Approves Fisk's Suggestion.

PICKERINGTON, O.—Have just read H. M. Fisk's suggestion in late Blade, to which I hasten to say Amen. Let us hear from others—JOHN KEMP.

Wants to Help.

HOLLOWAY, O.—Please send me ten extra copies of your paper for distribution among my neighbors.—W. J. DUNLAP.

Will Stand by the Blade.

CHANUTE, KAN.—I am just up from a sick spell and hasten to say you can draw on me for \$5.00 if needed to keep the good old Blade passing through the mails. I am greatly pleased with the change and glad to note that some of our old timers are coming back with their sledge-hammer blows for Freethought.—C. E. ALEXANDER.

Joins the School.

SIOUX FALLS, S. D.—Please send to me C. O. D. the books for your Scientific and Philosophical Correspondence School. Wish to become a member and will send tuition before September 1st, as I believe that will be in time. If not advise me and I will send at once.—R. VOGEL.

THE PARSON'S ODE.

"Come, Thou Fount."

(By R. D. Fausett.)

Come, thou fount of woes distressing,
Tune false hearts to sing thy praise,
Streams of brimstone, never ceasing,
Feed thy cruel, torturing blaze;
Teach the dupes melodious sonnets
Of angelic hosts above,
Build a throne and fix me on it
Glory and gold-power I love.

Here I raise my "Ebenezer,"

Hither I by graft am come,
And I hope by pilfered treasure
To build a palatial home;
Boodle found me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of god,
When, to rob men without danger,
I adopted "Jesus blood."

Oh, to myth how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be,
Let the gold coin like a fetter
Bind my craving heart to thee,
Prone to pilfer, Lord I feel it,
Prone to rob the friends I love,
Watch my purse, let no man steal it,
It will waft my soul above.

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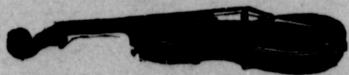
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